

Message Text

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65

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 /099 W
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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, EG, US

SUBJ: CRITICAL PRESS COMMENT ON RECENT EGPC AGREEMENT
WITH CONOCO

REF: CAIRO 9608

1. WELL-KNOW EGYPTIAN POLITICAL AND INTERNAL
AFFAIRS WRITER IBRAHIM AL-BAATHY PUBLISHED ARTICLE
AUGUST 27 IN AL-MUSSAWAR MAGSMAANE CRITICIZING RECENT
EGPC AGREEMENT WITH CONTINENTAL OIL COMPANY, IN
WHICH CONOCO GAINED EXPLORATION/PRODUCTION RIGHTS
IN LARGE AREA IN SOUTHERN EGYPT (SEE REFTEL).
AL-BAATHY'S CRITICISM LEVELED AGAINST DECISION GRANT
VAST AREA TO SINGLE COMPANY AND ALSO AGAINST CONOCO
WHICH, AL-BAATHY CHARGES, TAKES ORDERS FROM USG.
AS PROOF COMPANY'S GOVERNMENTAL CONNECTIONS,
AL-BAATHY CITES CONOCO, RECENT WITHDRAWAL
FROM SOMALIA AFTER USAID CLOSED ITS OFFICERS THERE AND
RELATIONS WITH USSR GREW CLOSE. AL-BAATHY ALSO
REMINDS HIS READERS THAT CONOCO WAS OPERATING IN
EGYPT UNDER NAME SAHARA OIL COMPANY IN 1956
BUT WITHDRAW AFTER TRIPARTITE AGGRESSION. AL-BAATHY
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POINTS OUT THAT MANY MEMBERS OF CURRENT

MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM STAFF WORKED FOR SAHARA
AND "ARE IMPRESSED WITH COMPANY." AL-BAATHY
CONCLUDES THAT ALL SUCH AGREEMENTS SHOULD BE FULLY
PUBLISHED AND DEBATED IN PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY.

2. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST PUBLIC CRITICISM OF
U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN EGYPTIAN PETROLEUM EXPLORATION/
EXPLOITATION EFFORT OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE. IT IS
ALSO LARGELY UNINFORMED, SINCE IT IS STANDARD
PROCEDURE FOR EACH EGPC AGREEMENT TO BE AFFIRMED
BY PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AND ISSUED IN FORM OF
FULLY-BINDING EGYPTIAN LAW, WHICH IS FREELY PUBLISHED
AND AVAILABLE. ARTICLE IS UNFORTUNATE BECAUSE IT
ATTEMPTS STIR CRITICISM OF MOST PROMISING
EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORT TO DATE
ON TOTALLY UNFOUNDED BASIS.
EILTS

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